

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for sample application to an acidic interval IPG (immobilised pH gradient) gel, comprising

- (a) providing said acidic interval IPG (immobilised pH gradient) gel as a pre-swollen RTG (ready-to-go) gel;
- (b) placing a hydrophilic support between the cathode and the cathode side of the gel, wherein said hydrophilic support is a sample loading support and is in contact with the cathode at one end; and
- (c) applying said sample onto said hydrophilic support;

wherein said hydrophilic support is derivatised with positively charged groups.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the support is made of regenerated cellulose, dextran, agarose, polyvinylalcohol, polyether sulfone, polysulfone, cellulose acetate, polyurethane, polyamide, nylon or other types of membranes and composite membranes.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the positively charged groups are cation groups.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of claim 3, wherein the cation groups are quaternary groups.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method of claim 4, wherein the quaternary groups are quaternary aminoethyl or quaternary ammonium groups.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the cation groups are diethylaminoethyl groups.

Claim 7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the support is made of regenerated cellulose derivatised with quaternary groups.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method of claim 8, wherein the quaternary groups are quaternary ammonium groups.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the sample is applied in preparative amounts.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The method of claim 1 as a first step in 2D electrophoresis.

Claim 12 (previously presented): A kit comprising a positively charged sample application support and an acidic interval IPG gel or strip which is a RTG -gel.

Claim 13 (cancelled)

Claim 14 (previously presented): The kit of claim 12, wherein the acidic interval is pH 3.5-5.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The kit of claim 12, wherein the support is made of regenerated cellulose derivatised with quaternary ammonium groups.

Claims 16-17 (cancelled)